

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USUN NY

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

COMIDEASTFOR

USS DAVIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PINS, ASEC, SOPN, DJ, SO, UK

SUBJ: BBC BROADCAST BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER ADDS NEW FUEL
TO LOCAL POLITICAL CAULDRON

REF: DJIBOUTI 130

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1. SUMMARY. THE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY THE BBC SOMALI LANGUAGE
SERVICE TO INTERVIEW FORMER PRIME MINISTER AHMED DINI ON 15
FEBRUARY PRODUCED A CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON THE DJIBOUTI
POLITICAL SCENE. ALTHOUGH THE VIEWS OF DINI ARE ALREADY WELL
KNOWN IN DJIBOUTI, HIS APPEARANCE ON THE POPULAR AND PRESTIGIOUS
BRITISH NEWS SERVICE GAVE HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE PRESIDENT AND

LIMITATIONS PLACED BY DINI IN THE NAME OF THE AFAR MINORITY ON THE GOVERNMENT'S FREEDOM OF ACTION FAR GREATER CELEBRITY THAN HITHERTO ACCORDED. THE INCIDENT SERIOUSLY COMPROMISES THE CONSTRUCTIVE AND ACTIVIST ROLE BEING TAKEN BY AHMED DINI'S SUCCESSOR, ABDALLAH KAMIL.

2. THE SOMALI LANGUAGE NEWS BROADCAST BY BBC LONDON EVERYDAY AT 1430Z AND 1800Z IS THE MOST WIDELY-HEARD NEWS STATION IN DJIBOUTI, ACCORDING TO MOST DJIBOUTIANS, IT IS MORE INTERESTING THAN THE BLAND LOCAL SERVICE; IT IS LESS PROPAGANDISTIC THAN RADIO MOGADISCIO WHICH BROADCASTS ALL DAY, NEWS ON THE RADIO MOSCOW SOMALI SERVICE (1400Z) AND BETTER INFORMED THAN RADIO CAIRO SOMALI NEWS (1500Z). BBC'S FAITHFUL LISTENERS WERE ELECTRIFIED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, 15 FEBRUARY, TO HEAR THE FAMILIAR VOICE OF AHMED DINI ON THE PRESTIGIOUS BBC. INTERVIEWED FROM PARIS BY THE SOMALI ANNOUNCER, KNOWN ONLY AS MUSTAFA, DINI WAS ASKED A NUMBER OF LEADING QUESTIONS, SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

Q. WHY DID YOU RESIGN?

A. BECAUSE OF INCREASING TRIBALISM BY THE GOVERNMENT, HAD TO RESIGN.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MPL? (NOTE: THE MOUVEMENT POPULAIRE DE LIBERATION, AN AFAR-BASED, ETHIOPIAN-SUPPORTED MARXIST GROUP WAS ACCUSED BY PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED OF COMPLICITY IN A BOMBING OF LOCAL PALMIER EN ZINC RESTAURANT ON DECEMBER 15, 1977, AND SUBSEQUENTLY WAS BANNED).

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A. UNTIL THE PRESENT TIME, THERE HAS BEEN NO VALID PROOF THAT THE MPL WAS IMPLICATED IN THE PALMIER EN ZINC AFFAIR.

THEREFORE THE PEOPLE HELD IN CONNECTION WITH THAT TRAGEDY ARE BEING HELD ILLEGALLY.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF DJIBOUTI?

A. THE NEW CABINET WAS FORMED IN COLLABORATION WITH A SPECIAL GROUP OF AFAR DEPUTIES UNDER LEADERSHIP OF BARKAT GOURAD (WHO ALSO PRESENT AT BBC INTERVIEW BUT HAD LITTLE TO SAY). THE GOVERNMENT HAS MY APPROVAL. HOWEVER, IF THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ABLE TO MEET AFAR DEMANDS IN THREE MONTHS, THE AFAR MINISTERS WILL RESIGN AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL FALL.

Q. WHY CAN'T ETHNIC GROUPS GET ALONG IN DJIBOUTI?

A. THERE ARE MANY SOMALI MERCENARIES WHO COME TO DJIBOUTI TO FOMENT PROBLEMS.

Q. WHY HAVE YOU SPLIT WITH THE PRESIDENT, WHO WAS YOUR COMPANION IN THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE?

A. THE PROBLEMS AROSE FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE, WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER ACCORDED ME HAD NO POWER. THE PRESIDENT CONTROLS EVERYTHING.

Q. WHAT IS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN DJIBOUTI?

A. VERY BAD. WITH THE WAR IN THE OGADEN, THE RAILWAY WAS CUT WITH SUBSEQUENT DRAMATIC DROP IN PORT OPERATIONS. THE LACK OF ETHNIC HARMONY IS ALSO A MAJOR ISSUE. BECAUSE OF THIS PROBLEM, THE LOCAL TRADESPEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO INVEST.

Q. WHAT POSITION SHOULD DJIBOUTI TAKE IN THE FIGHTING BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA?

A. DJIBOUTI IS WEAK, AND IT IS NECESSARY FOR DJIBOUTI TO BE IMPARTIAL TO SURVIVE. ETHIOPIA SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT DJIBOUTI IS INDEPENDENT BUT HAS A NORMAL PENCHANT FOR SOMALIA.

3. THE CHARGE FIRST LEARNED OF THIS BROADCAST ON 17 FEBRUARY
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DURING A CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED, WHO WASP FURIOUS ABOUT THE INTERVIEW. THIS CONVERSATION WILL BE REPORTED SEPTTEL IN MORE DETAIL; HOWEVER, HIS COMMENTS ABOUT DINI CENTERED ON FACT THAT DINI ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL LAW WHICH CREATED THE POST OF PRIME MINISTER. IF HE WAS NOT PLEASED WITH THE ARRANGEMENT, DINI HAD MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE THINGS. BECAUSE DINI COULDN'T MAKE THE JOB WORK, HE NOW TRIES TO DISCHARGE HIS FAILURE ON THE PRESIDENT.

4. THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERKNOWLEDGEABLE DJIBOUTIAN CONTACTS ALL AGREE THAT THE MOST UNFORTUNATE ASPECT OF THE INTERVIEW WAS THE IMPLIED THREE-MONTH TIME LIMIT ESTABLISHED FOR THE PRIME MINISTER ABDALLAH KAMIL TO SHOW RESULTS. DJIBOUTI'S PROBLEMS ARE GRAVE, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MIRACLES ARE GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. MANY SOMALIS REPORTEDLY ARE CHIDING THE PRESIDENT FOR WEAKNESS BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT AHMED DINI APPEARS TO HAVE ASSIGNED UNILATERALLY A VIXED LIFE SPAN TO THE GOVERNMENT.

5. EMBASSY LONDON IS REQUESTED TO OBTAIN AN ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERVIEW, IF AVAILABLE, TO BE FORWARDED BY POUCH TO DJIBOUTI.
CLARKE

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NNN

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